

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

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WHAT THE BELIEVER HAS IN CHRIST

BY: C. D. COLE

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," I Corinthians 1:30.

"But thanks to Him you are in Christ Jesus: He has become our wisdom from God, which is righteousness and sanctification and redemption," (Weymouth).

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God, which is righteousness and sanctification and redemption," (C.D.C.)

INTRODUCTION: This text gives us a rich and glorious view of what the believer has in Christ. The blessings we have in Christ are beyond our fondest dreams or imagination. If our poor trembling souls could take it all in, we would literally shout our way to glory. With nothing of our own, we have all things in Christ, *"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"* Colossians 2:3.

To get the most from this text we must go back and work our way up to it. After the salutation, Paul discusses the division in the church - four parties showing partiality to their particular leaders; *"every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized*

any other," I Corinthians 1:12-16. He is showing that he had done nothing to cause the division. He had not made himself unduly prominent; he had not pretended that he was the whole cheese.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel...," I Corinthians 1:17. Paul was a gospelizer, not a baptizer like John. The gospel and baptism are two different things. Paul saved men, instrumentally, not by baptizing them but by preaching the gospel to them.

And when he speaks of his preaching he contrasts it with the method of the philosophers of his day. He does not preach *"...with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect,"* I Corinthians 1:17. Paul was not an orator, swaying the crowds with flights of fancy or eloquence of words; he was a plain spoken preacher of the crucified Christ. He did not satisfy the Jews with miracles or entertain the Greeks with philosophy. He believed the saving value of the Gospel was in the facts of it and not in the presentment of it.

He goes on to show how worldly wisdom had failed in the salvation of men. The world by wisdom had not found God. He contrasts the wisdom of men with the wisdom of God. This divine wisdom which had provided salvation by the cross of Christ was foolishness to those who were in the path to destruction, but to the called this wisdom was apparent. The natural Jew tripped over it and the natural Greek laughed over it, but the called were saved by trusting it. Christ is the sum and substance of this Divine wisdom. He is the

way, the truth, and the life.

Now coming directly to the text we observe:

The Union With Christ

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." Scripture has much to say about our being in Christ. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...,"* II Corinthians 5:17. *"I knew a man in Christ."* *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,"* Romans 8:1. This is a vital union between the believer and Christ; like the branch in the vine; the stone in the building, and the members in the body. Like Noah in the ark, and the man-slayer in the city of refuge.

This Union Is Ascribed to God

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." The Holy Spirit put us into Christ. Symbolically we get into Christ by baptism, but actually and experimentally we get into Christ by faith and this faith is the work of the Spirit. We become a new creature in Christ when we were born of the Spirit. Faith is a grace born of God. *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world,"* I John 5:4. Faith did not originate with the sinner, but with the Spirit. Faith did not come out of the carnal mind that hates God, but out of the new man created in righteousness and true holiness. Every believer can thank God for his faith. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,"* Ephesians 2:8.

The Blessings of this Union

"...Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," I Corinthians 1:30.

Christ is our righteousness. On our own record before the law of God we are unrighteous, but united to him we stand on His spotless record and are righteous with his righteousness. As sinners we were condemned, but are *"being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"* Romans 3:24. *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,"* Acts 13:39. *"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,"* Romans 5:17-19. *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,"* II Corinthians 5:21. Righteousness is our standing before the law of God. No wonder nobody can condemn us! For Christ is our righteousness. This is humbling, but the only ground of hope. Nobody can go to glory over the toll-bridge of his own merit; we are all paupers and have to go over the free-bridge of Christ's righteousness.

Christ is our sanctification. Sanctification or holiness has to do with our nature or state, while righteousness has to do with our standing. As sinners we are morally defiled; we are filthy in the sight of God. Filthy is a Bible word. *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still,"* Revelation 22:11. This is the eternally fixed state of all people.

By our vital union with Christ we are now holy, for He is our holiness. This enables us to approach in spirit the holy God. *"...No man cometh unto the Father, but by me,"* John 14:6. And on the basis of our union with Christ, the Holy Spirit will keep on working on us until we are personally holy. *"Being confident of this*

very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Philippians 1:6. There is even now a holy principle in every believer, who has been created in righteousness and true holiness. *"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,"* Ephesians 4:24. It is this new principle or nature in us that makes us love the good and hate the evil. By this new nature we sigh and long for and struggle for personal perfection.

By this new nature we will or aim at perfection, but we do not have the power for perfection because of another law or principle with us. We have Christ's holiness now and will have our own holiness when our salvation is complete; this complete salvation will be the result of our union with Him.

Christ Is Our Redemption

Several Scriptures come to mind:

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith," Galatians 3:24. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,"* Ephesians 1:7. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..."* Galatians 3:13. There is redemption for us considered as moral beings. This is a present blessing. Not only a present blessing but an eternal one. *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,"* Hebrews 9:12.

There is also redemption for us, considered as physical beings. But this aspect of redemption is future and has to be waited for. *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,"* Romans 8:22-23. *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,"* Ephesians 4:30. *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,"* Philippians 3:20.

Our redemption now is a matter of faith; then it will be a thing of sight. We are now saved in hope; then salvation will be a full and glorious experience.

Some of us are somewhat unsettled on the doctrine of last things. We are not certain in our minds concerning some of the things about the second coming and related events. But here is something that appears definite, at least to me. *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself by subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all,"* I Corinthians 15:20-28.

Observe: Christ's people are to be raised at His coming. Then the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."* This appears to me that the reign of Christ is progressive in its results. It seems to me that He is reigning in a rebellious province, and that when His reign is ended all enemies shall be conquered or destroyed. And the last of these enemies is death. When He has destroyed death He turns the kingdom over to the Father. His mediatorial work has been done. There is nothing more for Him to do in the office of Mediator between God and men. Now according to the pre-millennial scheme of the last things the resurrection of the saints, or the destruction of death, marks the beginning of the reign of Christ. But the Bible says it is the end of his personal reign.

To Summarize

We see man's natural deplorable condition; blind, guilty, filthy, the victim of death.

We see how indispensable Christ is. In Him we have all things. Without Him we will ultimately have nothing. We would be as poor as the ex-rich man in hell, crying for one drop of water.

We learn the necessity of union with Christ; personal and spiritual; union effected by the Spirit and experienced by faith.

Christ should ever be the subject of our preaching and the object of faith. In Christ man's help has been found.

Finally, union with Christ should be the chief end of our solicitude. Many other associations may have their importance, but this is vital. Our union with Him will determine and regulate all other associations. Union with Him will bring us into union with His people. Union with Him will separate us from the world and its sinful ways.

The proper reaction of our hearts to this blessed truth has been put in verse by Dr. Doddridge:

*"My God, assist me while I rise
An anthem of harmonious praise!
My heart thy wonders shall proclaim,
And spread its banners to thy name.*

*I Christ I view a store divine:
My Father, all that store in thine;
By thee prepared, by thee bestowed;
Hail to my Saviour, and my God!*

*Condemned, thy criminal I stood,
And awful Justice asked my blood;
That welcome Saviour, from thy throne
Brought righteousness and pardon down.*

*My soul was all o'er spread with sin,
And lo! His grace hath made me clean:
He rescues from the infernal foe,
And full redemption will bestow.*

*Ye saints, assist my grateful tongue;
Ye angels, warble back my song;
For love like this demands the praise
of Heavenly harps and endless days."*

Introduction: This world is wet with blood and tears; humanity groans under many burdens; everywhere men and women are breaking physically and mentally. Ev-

The Need, the Source, and the Means of Comfort

By: C. D. COLE

ery effort to end drudgery only increases it. With all the convenient gadgets and modern appliances men and women are still tired, and seeking rest without finding it. With all the means and agencies of comfort, people are sadder than ever. In the face of unparalleled advances in medicine and surgery, people of all ages still die. With an ever increasing army of psychiatrists and psychologists with their new techniques of how to relax and keep from being frustrated, there is more frustration and disappointment than ever. With all the rapid means of going places, men are always behind and never have time to serve God. With all the skill men have acquired in presenting things, there is more misunderstanding than ever before. With all the means for self-protection and with all the campaigns for safety, life was never so hazardous as now. Truly, this world is a wilderness of woe.

Men and Women Need Comfort

The trials of life are severe. The cares are manifold. The burdens are heavy. Troubles are common; nobody is free long at a time. Trouble is caused by sin. It may be your own sin; your husband's sin; your child's sin; your wife's sin. Trouble is caused by sickness. Your own health may be broken. Or you may have to sit night after night by the bedside of some loved one. Trouble is caused by finances; bills to meet and no money—living costs soaring and no job, old age and no pension.

The Source of Comfort

"Blessed by God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," II Corinthians 1:3. Men go to wrong sources for comfort. Some try to drown their troubles by drinking; they get relief but not comfort; they feel good for awhile but not comfort. Some try to find comfort in pleasure. They get relief, but no comfort. The highest paid people are the entertainers; the show people, the people whose business it is to make people laugh. But this is not comfort.

The Means of Comfort

If God is the God of all comfort, He has means by which we are comforted.

Prayer: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,"* Philippians 4:6.

Scriptures: *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our*

learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope," Romans 15:4. *"Wherefore comfort one another with these words,"* I Thessalonians 4:18. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,"* Romans 8:28.

Providence: God will bring things to pass for the comfort of his people. *"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity,"* Philippians 4:10. *"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord,"* I Thessalonians 3:8.

Steadfastness in a Christian people is the life of a Christian minister. In the **manner** of his preaching. Effect on the minds is very great. If the people are often absent, late, inattentive or sleepy, it is death to him. But if constant, early, attentive, affectionate and spiritual, it is life.

In the **matter** of his preaching. If he can point to you as exemplifications of the effects of the gospel without fear of contradiction. My brethren, enable your pastor to refer to you as his epistles, his letters of recommendation, known and read of all men.

In the **success** of his ministry. This greatly depends on the cooperation of his people, on their knowing one another, and provoking one another to love and good works, and on each one being willing to take some part in active service. But if every thing is left to him, his heart will die, and his work will die in his hands.

It is not difficult to account for this—for your sanctification and salvation are his reward. After all, my brethren, this is of greater concern to you than to your minister. For if he be faithful, he shall have his reward, whatever become of you. Through Israel be not gathered, yet will he be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. His loss may be made up, but yours will be irreparable.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," III John 4.